

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 062505

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT:INTSUM

1. LEBANON. THE MILITARY COUP INITIATED BY GEN. AHDAB ON MARCH 11 HAS BOGGED DOWN IN THE WAKE OF PRESIDENT FRANGIE'S PERSISTENT REFUSAL TO RESIGN. DESPITE THE REQUEST BY A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY OF PARLIAMENT THAT HE RESIGN, THE PRESIDENT APPEARS TO HAVE RETAINED ENOUGH MILITARY BACKING TO PROCRASTINATE FURTHER.

2. FRANGIE, STUBBORN BY TEMPERMENT, SEES HIMSELF AS THE DEFENDER OF THE PRESIDENCY, WHICH IS THE KEYSTONE OF THECHRISTIAN POSITION. HE FEARS THAT HIS OUSTER COULDBE A PRECEDENT FOR FURTHER TAMPERING WITH THAT OFFICE.

3. AHDAB'S OPTIONS AT THIS POINT SEEM TO BOIL DOWN TO:

--CONTINUING POLITICAL PRESSURE ON FRANGIE TO RESIGN;

--LAUNCHING A MILITARY ATTACK ON THE PRESIDENTIAL

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 062505

PALACE; AND

--IGNORING FRANGIE AND CONSIDERING HIM AS HAVING
RESIGNED.

NONE OF THESE ALTERNATIVES APPEARS PARTICULARLY
ATTRACTIVE.

4. IF AHDAB CALLED ON MUSLIM ARMY DESERTERS OR THE
MUSLIM RADICAL MILITIAS TO LAY SEIGE TO THE PALACE,
THERE IS EVERY LIKELIHOOD THAT THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS
WOULD ABANDON THEIR AMBIVALENT POSITIONS AND SUPPORT
FRANGIE AGAINST THE MUSLIM THREAT. A REKINDLING OF
MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN WARFARE WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY
FOLLOW SUCH AN ATTEMPT.

5. POLITICAL EFFORTS AT ACHIEVING FRANGIE'S RESIGNATION
SHOW LITTLE SIGN OF IMMEDIATE SUCCESS IN LIGHT OF THE
FAILURE OF THE MARCH 14 PARLIAMENTARY PETITION CALLING
ON THE PRESIDENT TO STEP DOWN. DEPUTIES ARE DIVIDED
OVER WHAT ADDITIONAL STEP, IF ANY, THEY CAN NOW TAKE.
NEVERTHELESS, THE SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT HAS CALLED
FOR ANOTHER SESSION ON MARCH 16.

6. THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PHALANGE PARTY, LARGEST OF THE
RIGHTIST GROUPS, WANTS THE LEGITIMATE RESIGNATION OF
FRANGIE. IT CONSIDERS LEGITIMACY OF THE PRESIDENCY
TO BE OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE, HOWEVER, AND IT
WOULD OPPOSE ANY ILLEGAL MEANS TO OUST FRANGIE.

7. MEANWHILE, THE LEBANESE ARMY CONTINUES TO DISINTE-
GRATE. SOLDIERS ARE TURNING TOWARD THE MILITIAS
REPRESENTING THEIR VARIOUS RELIGIOUS FAITHS.

8M ALTHOUGH SYRIA SUPPORTS FRANGIE'S DEPARTURE FROM THE
SCENE, IT HAS INSTRUCTED ITS SAIQA FORCES IN LEBANON
TO RETAIN THE APPEARANCE OF NON-INVOLVEMENT.
PRESIDENT ASAD CONSIDERS THE CRISIS IN LEBANON OF
SUFFICIENT GRAVITY TO HAVE POSTPONED HIS OFFICIAL VISIT
TO FRANCE, WHICH HE WAS TO HAVE STARTED ON MARCH 15.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 062505

9. THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF A QUICK CLARIFICATION
OF THE LEBANESE POLITICAL SITUATION. IT MAY BE DAYS
BEFORE ANY OF THE PARTIES TAKES ANY DECISIVE ACTION.
THE DRIFT OF EVENTS INCREASES THE POSSIBILITY THAT A
CHANGE OF OCCURRENCE WILL REOPEN INTER-CONFESSIONAL
WARFARE. (SECRET/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT).

10. EGYPT. THE MOST DRAMATIC POINT IN PRESIDENT'S SADAT

MAJOR SPEECH TO THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY ON MARCH 14 WAS HIS CALL FOR THE ABROGATION OF THE EGYPTIAN-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP TREATY. THE ASSEMBLY IS SCHEDULED TO MEET ON MARCH 15 ON THE DRAFT BILL FOR ABROGATION, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO MEET LITTLE OPPOSITION.

11. THE 15-YEAR TREATY, SIGNED IN 1971, IS ESSENTIALLY A MEANINGLESS DOCUMENT, BUT IT SERVED AS A SYMBOL OF CONTINUED AMITY BETWEEN EGYPT AND THE USSR THROUGH THE MANY UPHEAVALS IN THEIR RELATIONS OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS. SADAT'S READINESS TO CANCEL THE PACT INDICATES THAT HE HAS FINALLY WRITTEN OFF ANY EXPECTATION OF PUTTING HIS RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW ON AN EVEN KEEL AND WILL NO LONGER MAKE EVEN A PRETENSE OF MAINTAINING A CIVIL RELATIONSHIP.

12. SADAT APPARENTLY HAS GIVEN UP ANY HOPE THAT MORE SOVIET ARMS WILL BE FORTHCOMING AND THAT HIS POTENTIAL FOR APPLYING ADDITIONAL PRESSURES ON MOSCOW IS NOW NIL. THE STATED REASON FOR ANNULING THE TREATY WAS SOVIET REFUSAL TO OVERHAUL MIG-21 ENGINES OR TO PERMIT INDIA EITHER TO PERFORM THE OVERHAULS OR TO PROVIDE AIRCRAFT SPARE PARTS. BECAUSE OF THIS SOVIET EMBARGO, SADAT SAID IN HIS SPEECH THAT ALL OF EGYPT'S ARMS WILL BECOME "SCRAP METAL" WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR OR YEAR AND A HALF.

13. THE FUTURE OF SOVIET-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS WILL DEPEND MUCH UPON HOW MOSCOW REACTS TO SADAT'S SLAP IN THE FACE. EGYPTIAN AUTHORITIES WILL BE MONITORING COMMUNIST AND OTHER LEFTIST ELEMENTS IN EGYPT FOR POSSIBLE SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITY PROMPTED BY SADAT'S ABROGATION ACTION. (SECRET/NOFORN)

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 062505

14. RELATIONS BETWEEN EGYPT AND LIBYA ALSO CONTINUE TO DETERIORATE. CAIRO BANNED TRAVEL TO LIBYA BY MOST EGYPTIANS ON MARCH 13, AND THE EGYPTIAN MEDIA HAVE TAKEN THE GLOVES OFF IN TREATMENT OF QADHAFI. THE LIBYAN GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN ACCUSED OF TORTURING EGYPTIANS, FOMENTING SABOTAGE AND POLITICAL ASSASSINATION IN THE ARAB WORLD, AND BETRAYING THE LIBYAN REVOLUTION. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) KISSINGER

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